



Business Case

Project Name: SFA Enterprise Portal Strategy & Development

Channel: CIO

Project Sponsor: Helene Epstein

Project Lead: Sandi Foy McCabe

Project Description

Describe the need for change (the business problem to be addressed).

SFA is comprised of over 1,500 employees serving multiple customer segments, including but not limited to schools, financial partners, students, third party vendors and SFA operating partners. Currently, both SFA employees and customers access information in many different ways. This information is communicated and/or exchanged via more than 15 web sites connected to multiple back-end systems, other electronic processes, as well as written and verbal communications. It is important that all employees have access to the same information and this information is communicated to the SFA customers in a similar manner. For the SFA customers, it is important that one central and consistent source be available for communications with SFA.

Business Challenges:

- No single repository of portal objects that can be reused in development efforts
- No single point of access (via the internet) to SFA programs
- Multiple applications and systems for internal and external use (whether for admin activities or for SFA business processes)
- Multiple communication methods with no process for consistency
- No collaboration space for employees (internal) or with customers
- No method for knowledge transfer or management of corporate knowledge assets for SFA
- No true standard for SFA web site development or branding
- Manual processes with multiple hand-offs exist today for T&Es and several other functions
- Information from business systems not readily available, requires signing on to multiple systems
- Lack of proactively pushing information relevant to an employees job function
- Lack of personalization for SFA site users, internal and external
- Employees are unable to access information anytime / anywhere from any device
- Information is hard to find across multiple sources
- No single strategy for implementing web-based applications or web front ends to complex back end business processes

What is the purpose of the initiative?

Portal technology can help to solve the business challenges described above. The strategy will focus on how SFA can develop an enterprise repository of portal objects that can include significant business processes and be tailored to individual employee or customer needs. It will allow for a way to ensure standardizing content management.



SFA has started several web efforts during the past year, but there is no overarching strategy and guidance for these efforts. With the emergence and continued development and growth of portal technology, as well as SFA's diverse needs, it is necessary that a comprehensive strategy be adopted for portal and web development to avoid stove pipe web products that are unable to communicate with one another. With an enterprise strategy in an environment where technology is rapidly advancing, any changes to enterprise standards would be immediately applied to all projects using it.

Also, this initiative will ensure that SFA's Internet architecture is not flawed. In doing so this initiative would provide a sound architectural foundation upon which to build applications. If the architecture were flawed it would be impossible to re-engineer; it would then need to be rebuilt at a much greater economical cost.

What is the scope of the initiative, including what it is not?

The scope of the SFA Enterprise Web Portal Strategy and Development initiative would include the following:

- Further evaluation of the business problem through requirements gathering for employee needs and customer needs
- Presentation of a Portal Information Day for SFA
- Definition of portal in terms of SFA (immediate, so communication can be consistent throughout the organization very quickly) for both enterprise communications as well as web based access to application systems.
- Analysis of SFA's multiple web sites and how they should be run in the future in relation to the portal
- Analysis of SFA's need for knowledge/asset management
- Analysis of SFA's need for personalization (role-based views) and collaboration, internally and externally; including a look at methods that already exist today
- Analysis of SFA's need for search capabilities, internally and externally
- Analysis of SFA's need for content management on web sites
- Analysis of skills needed within SFA and through contractors for development and management of a portal
- Evaluation of portal products – keeping in mind that customization should be minimal (less than 20%) and if necessary, SFA must drive to make business processes fit within the product
- Analysis of products and services that can be made more accessible to customers and employees via portal technology
- Prototype to include basic portal functionality and one legacy system integration
- Technical advisory support for other portal projects.

This initiative should also include the following, but in conjunction with the indicated group:

- Analysis of potential links into legacy data and the currency of that data – in conjunction with the EAI effort through CIO's IT Management group and Data Standardization IPT
- Analysis of single sign on – in conjunction with the Electronic ID Mad Dog team lead by CIO's IT Management and Innovations groups
- Analysis of standardized architecture for portals – in conjunction with CIO's IT Management group (Integrated Technical Architecture)
- Analysis of the Department of ED's overall portal strategy and how it fits with SFA – in conjunction with ED's CIO
- Analysis of standardized look and feel for all SFA portal and web activity – in conjunction with Communications



Other items for consideration and integration during development of the strategy and/or in a consulting role will include:

- SFANet – use of Interwoven and current work plans
- School Portal – use of Interwoven, Autonomy and Viador, and current work plans
- Financial Partners Portal – poised to start requirements on January 1, 2001
- Students Portal – poised to start requirements early 2001; also students.gov already exists
- Coordinate with Electronic Document Management standards as they evolve
- CRM initiative – analysis of CRM activities and web access through a Portal to offer products and services through web
- COD initiative – advisory assistance in terms of front end web design and integration with portal.

The strategy must present SFA with a framework for building a unified portal to reach employees and all customers. The strategy phase includes enterprise portal requirement analysis but should also look at standardized ways to gather requirements for each phase of portal development (to be done with the various channels). Portal products will be evaluated and selected to meet SFA's business needs. Within product selection, it is important to note that development team training and access to product experts will be important especially considering the aggressive SFA modernization schedule. The strategy phase will envelope a prototype to demonstrate how the selected product meets SFA needs (this will include a tie-in to a legacy system). The strategy must acknowledge risks associated with adopting an enterprise wide strategy and how those risks can be mitigated. It must also be flexible to the changing technological environment and the changing needs of SFA. This strategy should be a long term for an enterprise portal architecture at SFA.

What is the start date and end date of the initiative?

- **Strategy and Prototype** – Start immediately following IRB approval. Duration is 14 –16 weeks.

What other business areas/external groups are affected by the implementation of this initiative and how are they affected?

The implementation of the strategy will ultimately impact all business units within SFA as well as its customers and partners. It will increase information sharing and communications internally across all communities, as well as externally across various roles at schools, guaranty agencies, lenders, third party vendors and students.

What systems are impacted by the implementation of this initiative and how are they impacted?

This will be dependent upon detailed requirements. The strategy and prototype phase will impact at least one back-end legacy system. The further implementation of portals will eventually impact all legacy systems. Communication links must be set up from each system to the portal using currently established technical architecture including the EAI layer.

What business processes are impacted by the implementation of this initiative and how are they impacted?

The initial stage of strategy development will not impact business processes, although the strategy and prototype will provide standards to invoke selected business processes using portal technology. With implementation both *internal employee processes* as well as *community business processes* will likely be impacted. The strategy to be developed will drive a plan for future web portal development that will move toward new ways of doing business for all of SFA. The implementation of this plan will be done in



phases over several years. SFA will have a clearer picture once the strategy is developed. Without such a strategy, the potential for non-standard stove-piped web applications is high and the integration efforts to unify the applications later are unknown.

Technologies Used

List the proposed technologies that will be used to implement this project

Name/type	Proposed use	Has technology been used at SFA before? Where?	Does Technology fit SFA's Architecture Standard? Explain.	Does SFA have the technical expertise to implement this technology? Why?
Portal technology	In building SFA Enterprise Portal(s)	Yes, Viador in Schools Portal.	Yes. SFA has chosen a portal product, Viador. However, this project will revisit that product as well as the search engine, Autonomy, and the content management tool, Interwoven. The strategy component of this initiative is to perform a thorough review of current products on the market to determine which best fits SFA's architecture and meets organizational needs with minimal customization (no greater than 20%).	SFA has some along with partnership with the Modernization Partner.

Benefits

Provide a narrative discussion to explain why SFA is the doing the initiative and what project objectives or expected outcomes can be quantified and how can they be measured. Demonstrate that the initiative supports the goals and objectives of SFA, how it supports these goals and objectives, to what extent it helps SFA achieve these goals and objectives and when these benefits will be realized.

Reduce Unit Cost

Quantified Benefit (\$)	How will benefit be measured/realized?	When will benefit be realized?
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Cost avoidance or minimization through enterprise-wide effort providing requirements gathering, product review and selection, a sound internet architecture and the development of common standards for Web Portal development for each of the Channels.	We need metrics if any exist as to the amount of rework or product failure or shortfall that can be avoided through an enterprise-wide strategy.	Immediately upon product rollout.
Costs associated with integration efforts experienced elsewhere at SFA can be avoided with the establishment of enterprise standards.	By comparing costs of projects completed prior to establishment of enterprise standards with costs incurred after standards establishment.	Immediately upon product rollout.
Decreased maintenance costs associated with maintaining multiple SFA web sites.	Eliminating the need to maintain 15 to 18 different web sites and 3 portals within SFA would substantially decrease the overall maintenance costs.	Immediately upon product rollout.
<i>Assumptions</i>		

Increase Customer Satisfaction

Quantified/Qualitative Benefit	How will benefit be measured/realized?	When will benefit be realized?
Eliminate the need for customers having to use multiple applications and Ids to locate and retrieve needed information.	Providing customers with only one ID and accessibility to all needed information through their personalized Web Portal.	Dependent on the Single Sign On Initiative.
Enterprise infrastructure and standards will allow a Web Portal to pull data from one repository of portal objects and thus avoid inconsistencies in information being viewed by our customers.	Reduced calls to call center. Elimination of complaint calls seeking clarification due to data inconsistency.	Immediately upon product rollout.
Customers will be able to use portals as their desktop and personalize it to meet their individual needs and preferences.	By customer acceptance of the portal technology solution.	Immediately upon product rollout.
Promotes and facilitates more efficient and effective collaboration/partnering between SFA customers and SFA	Through more independent information gathering by customers and enhanced collaboration/partnering with SFA	Within 3 months of product rollout. (90 day lead time for portal to 'take hold'.)



employees.	employees. Should be realized through less complaint calls to the call centers and more valuable discussions on-line via the portal.	
<i>Assumptions</i>		

Increase Employee Satisfaction

Quantified/Qualitative Benefit	How will benefit be measured/realized?	When will benefit be realized?
Eliminate the need to locate and retrieve information using multiple applications, but rather providing a single repository for meeting information needs.	From employee feedback and acceptance of the new technology solution.	After implementation.
Employees can use the portal as their desktop and personalize it to meet their individual needs and preferences.	From employee feedback and acceptance of the new technology solution.	After implementation.
Promotes and facilitates more efficient and effective collaboration and knowledge sharing between employee and employee as well as employee and customer.	Through increased sharing of information and best practices among SFA employees, and enhanced employee-customer relations.	After implementation and increasing as socialization takes hold.
<i>Assumptions</i>		

Estimated overall dollar amount of all benefits listed above.

Quantified Benefits					
BY	BY+1	BY+2	BY+3	BY+4	Total
\$497,708	\$497,708	\$497,708	\$497,708	\$497,708	\$2,488,540
<i>Assumptions</i>					



Please refer to Financials Attachment for detail and assumptions.

Costs

Provide costs, including those to implement the initiative and the costs to support it over its useful life.

Note: Financial measures indicate that this is not a good investment, but consideration should be given to the fact that this case includes all software and hardware costs for portal development.

COSTS						
	BY	BY+1	BY+2	BY+3	BY+4	Total
Development	<u>\$2,700,000</u>					<u>\$2,700,000</u>
Operations						
Prod. Proc						
Key Pers.						
Ad Hoc						
Sys. Maint.						
Telecom.						
Data Center						
Sub. Ops						
Total	<u>\$2,700,000</u>					<u>\$2,700,000</u>

Assumptions

Please refer to Financials Analysis Section for detail and assumptions.

Total Cost of Ownership

What is the level of required enhancement after implementation?

Portal maintenance will be continuous, because as the technology evolves, the portal will need to be enhanced to keep pace. The portal strategy should outline a phased implementation method that will be



executed over multiple years. This method will be flexible to change as the technology and business needs evolve.

What is the life span of this initiative?

It is anticipated that this project will be continuous and will move SFA in the direction of a state-of-art online e-commerce solution.

Alternatives

Discuss what could be done in place in this initiative and describe the consequences of each alternative.

Alternative	Consequence
Remain as-is	Each Channel independently performing requirements gathering, product review and selection, and portal development without common standards and architectural consistency.
Non-technology solution	N/A
Enhance an existing system	Replatform Schools Portal to prove results of strategy phase and gain experience with portal development using possible new technology.
Implement on a smaller scale	SFANet to Corporate Web Portal to prove strategy and technology chosen work as intended before moving forward with the customer segments.
Other	

Risks

Risk	Description of Risk	Mitigation Strategy
Financial	Cost overruns due to rework and more than expected customization.	Through standards developed in strategy component of this initiative and by performing Application Development QAs (IV&V and SI&T activities) to avoid/reduce rework.
Technology	Product selected requires more than 20% targeted customization resulting in cost overruns and schedule delays. Selection of the 'wrong' COTS tool for the	Payment for services rendered tied to meeting milestones. Needs assessment and Product evaluation is



	SFA environment.	intended to resolve this risk. Participation of employees and business areas.
Scope	'Scope creep' All customer segments will want a 'total' portal all at once.	Must adhere to the strategy's phased implementation approach.
Management	Allocation of resources. Selection of wrong company for strategy	Portal strategy must have buy-in and support of upper management. Utilize Mod Partner's expertise to select the right vendor.
Exposure	SFA user community may not be ready for the portal concept.	Will get buy-in of from the various business units.

Acquisition Strategy

Sources (Indicate the prospective sources of supplies or services that can meet the need of this project. List the most likely offerors for the requirement, and/or the manufacturer and model of the equipment that will most likely be offered).

SFA CIO, modernization partner management and its subcontractors to develop web portal strategy and web portal development.

Competition (Describe how competition will be sought, promoted, and sustained throughout the course of the acquisition, including any performance requirements that will be required).

Contemplated award to the Modernization Partner contract with selected subcontractors.

Contract Considerations (For each contract contemplated, discuss contract type selection; use of multiyear contracting, options, or other special contracting methods, ex: performance-based).

Firm fixed price and performance based.

Schedule/Milestones (including acquisition cycle)

#	Milestone	Start Date	End Date
1	Requirements Definition (6 weeks) Draft Strategy Methodology (Deliverable)	Mid November '00	Early January '01
2	Product Evaluation (2 weeks)	Mid January '01	Late January '01
3	Pilot at VDC/Development of a Prototype (6-8 weeks) Final Strategy Methodology (Deliverable) Items 1-3 apply to the development of the portal strategy	February '01	March '01
4	Portal Strategy Support	April '01	September '01



**Department of Education
Office of Student Financial Assistance**
